Endorsement or Testimonial

Definition: Propaganda techniques that attempts to connect a famous or respectable person with a product or item.

Examples:

• Dr. Robert Jarvik, creator of the artificial heart, used to endorse Lipitor, a drug that reduces cholesterol in the body.

• Diet ads in print almost always show before and after pictures.

• When Oprah Winfrey mentions a book, it becomes a best seller. She made an offhand comment about never eating beef again and Texas cattle ranchers took her to court, saying she seriously damaged their business and livelihood.

• Jared Fogle lost over 200 lbs. by eating only Subway foods.

1. Do these endorsements really work? Why or why not? Could LeBron James successfully endorse a work of fiction? Could Oprah endorse a sports shoe?

2. You know that many of the television advertisements that show a random person choosing one product over another actually use paid actors. Does the endorsement ad still work?

3. When the commercial using Dr. Jarvik first aired and appeared in print, people complained that he didn’t practice medicine and that he used a body double for the scenes depicting him rowing and running. Can you think of other celebrity endorsements that have collapsed in controversy?

4. You are required to put together a campaign to change the school cafeteria’s selections. What local celebrity endorsements could you use? Are there teachers or students who would provide effective testimonies?

5. Think of 10 considerations that must be made when selecting an endorser. For example, does age matter? Profession? Education? Celebrity?